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SIPDIS

E.O. 12356: DECL: N/A

TAGS:

SUBJECT: FAMILIES OF THE MISSING REQUEST ASSISTANCE

1. THIS IS AN ACTION MESSAGE -- SEE PARA 3.

2. ON JUNE 28 AMBASSADOR GALBRAITH MET WITH ZELENKA FARKAS, REPRESENTING THE CENTER FOR PROTECTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF IMPRISONED AND MISSING CROATIAN CITIZENS AND THEIR FAMILIES. FARKAS SOUGHT EMBASSY ASSISTANCE IN RESOLVING THE FATE OF 2,865 PEOPLE STILL MISSING FROM THE
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PAGE 02 ZAGREB 02456 291416Z
WAR, AND PARTICULARLY THE JNA SIEGE OF VUKOVAR IN 1991. THE CENTER HAS COMPILED LISTS OF MISSING PERSONS, INCLUDING DATES AND LOCATION OF CAPTURE, AND HAS SUBMITTED THE DATA TO THE UN CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN GENEVA. FARKAS SAID, HOWEVER, THAT SO FAR THEIR APPEALS TO THE UN FOR ASSISTANCE HAVE NOT BEEN ANSWERED. FARKAS' GROUP HAS ALSO SENT AN APPEAL TO SERBIAN PRESIDENT MILOSEVIC REQUESTING THAT FRY AUTHORITIES PROVIDE INFORMATION ON WHETHER INDIVIDUALS ARE ALIVE OR DEAD. THE AMBASSADOR STRESSED THAT THERE IS LITTLE THE EMBASSY CAN DO BEYOND PROVIDING MORAL SUPPORT, BUT SAID THAT WE ARE STILL WORKING FOR UN ACCESS TO SUSPECTED MASS GRAVE SITES IN SECTOR EAST AND CONTINUE TO PRESS AUTHORITIES IN KNIN FOR INFORMATION. HE SAID THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT OFFICIALS IN SECTOR EAST OR BELGRADE WOULD COME FORWARD WITH AN ACCOUNTING OF THE MISSING BECAUSE THEY WOULD IMPLICATE THEMSELVES IN WAR CRIMES.

3. FOR USUN: POST REQUESTS THAT USUN CONSIDER RAISING THE ISSUE OF THE MISSING IN CROATIA AND BOSNIA AND HERCEGOVINA, PERHAPS IN A UNSC PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT. THIS WOULD FOCUS ATTENTION ON A COMPELLING HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM AND BE OF COMFORT TO FAMILIES WHO FEEL THEIR CONCERNS ARE FORGOTTEN. IT WOULD ALSO KEEP ATTENTION FOCUSED ON WAR CRIMES, WITH SOME PRESUMED DETERRENT BENEFIT.

GALBRAITH

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